

File - M2523
Facilities
Build - Up

October 26, 1956

Memorandum For: Mr. E. Allan Lightner, Jr.
Deputy Assistant Secretary for
Public Affairs
Department of State

The proposals in your memorandum of October 11th involve problems of technical, political, and intelligence nature, in the solution of which we desire to be as effective as we can within the limits of our mission.

The technical questions are constantly under review, with the full participation of our engineers and the State Department, within FPIB. Rather than dwell upon the essentially technical problems at this time, however, I would like to give you my reactions to your suggestions with reference to our current operating policies and our budget position.

Essentially, your proposal is that every effort be made to reach effectively with both medium and shortwave broadcasting foreign audiences in these particularly important target areas: 1) Soviet Central Asia; 2) the Near East, and 3) Central and South Africa.

Since this breaks down into medium and shortwave, let's consider first medium wave. It is assumed that medium wave is not proposed for Soviet Central Asia or Central and South Africa. As to medium wave for the Near East, I am sure you are familiar with the fact that we proposed a new medium wave installation for this area in the Deficiency Appropriation for 1957, which was denied by the House on the grounds that it should come up with the regular appropriation. Therefore, we have included in the 1958 request provision for a 100 KW medium wave installation in the Eastern Mediterranean. We expect to support this vigorously and hope to have favorable action.

As to shortwave, the question of coverage of Soviet Central Asia must be related to the number of shortwave receivers in that area and the population. In our continuing consideration of this particular problem, we have not been able to get either up-to-date data or reliable estimates. Based on such information as is available, we have concluded that the expense of installation and annual operating costs for coverage in this area could not be justified. As I believe you know, we are in the process of installing two 100 KW shortwave transmitters in San Fernando, The Philippines, which should be on the air in April or May, 1957. We have considered too, the question of megawatt shortwave power at San Fernando, and have decided to discontinue further discussion of this until we have the benefit of the results to be obtained from the 100 KW shortwave installation.

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As to added shortwave in the Near East, I am not familiar with any requirements over and above the shortwave now servicing this area. As a matter of fact, medium wave coverage here is of vastly greater importance and conforms with listening habits so closely that shortwave is of only marginal utility. If, however, you are proposing shortwave in the Near East for the purpose of covering those parts of the Central Soviet Union which could be reached from a Near Eastern high power shortwave installation, I feel that we must have more information as to population and receiver set distribution in that area than is now available to us.

As to shortwave in the Central and South Africa area, again we have technical questions as to the type of coverage that could be provided and, more particularly, the number of receiving sets available. In this area too, the political aspects seem to us far from clear. Do we want to broadcast directly to native populations in the colonial areas? If not, what purpose would be served? If we are to reach native populations, how does this advance our own national objectives? These questions must be resolved to determine what languages would be used, although receiver set distribution is the first basic question. I would also like to call to your attention the '58 budget proposals for 30 minute daily broadcasts to Africa in 4 languages, plus a supporting effort in the field of packaged programs for local placement.

In conclusion, may I assure you that we share your desire to make the best possible use of the broadcast medium, and if some of the questions raised above can be worked out, we will make every effort to supply suitable means to achieve the objectives you have in mind.

/s/ Theodore C. Streibart
Director